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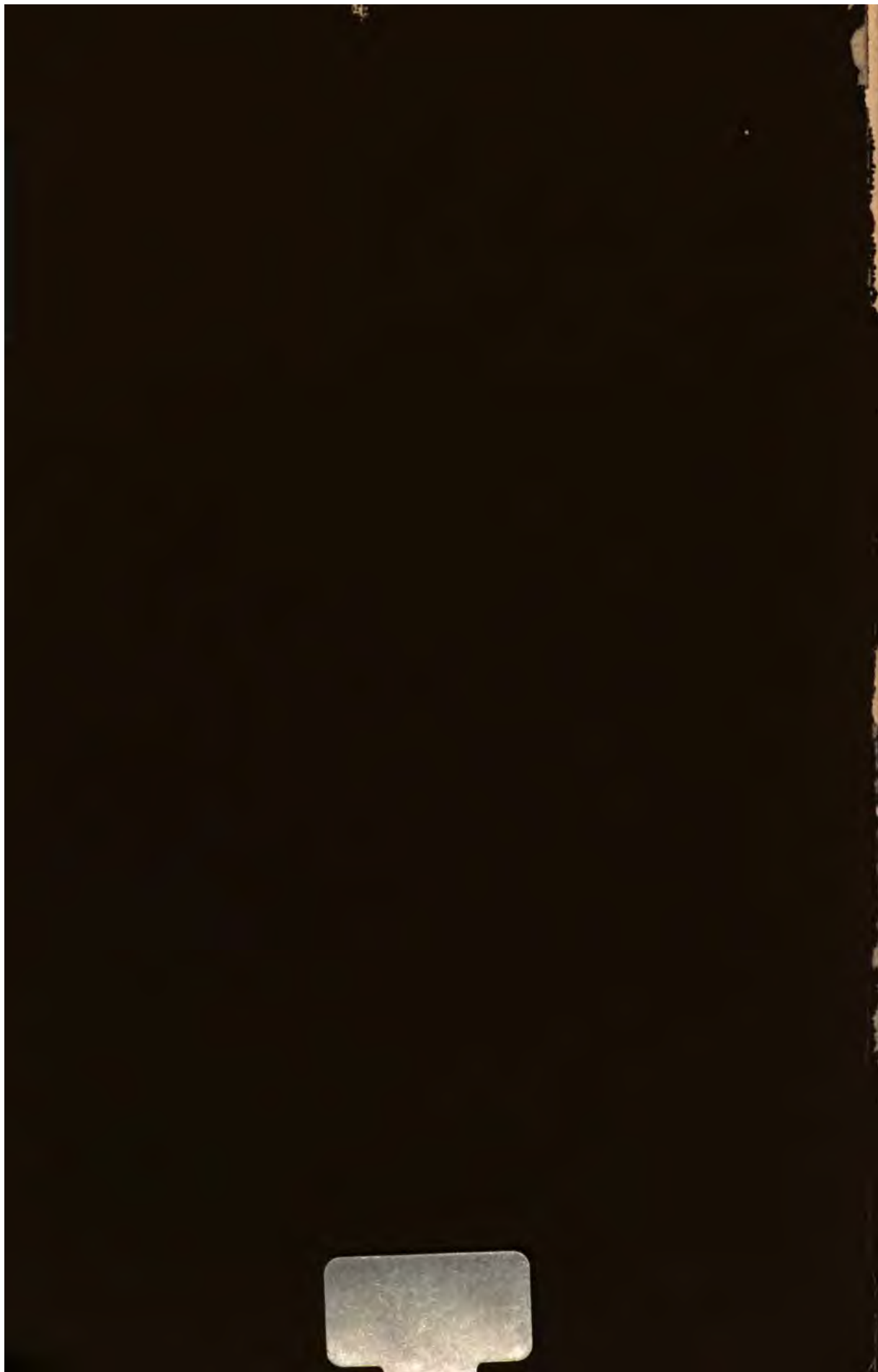
—OR—

TRUTH IN A MASK.

—++—

STASIA—BY SOLON N. SAPP.

of a Dream that was not all a Dream."





1. Poetry, American

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HALF AN HOUR;

—OR,—

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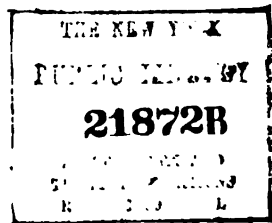
A FANTASIA.

By SOLON N. SAPP,
(Of the St. Louis Bar.)

"I HAD A DREAM THAT WAS NOT ALL A DREAM."

ST. LOUIS:
DEMOCRAT PRINTING COMPANY,
1875.

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HALF AN HOUR.

CHAPTER I.

The gayest moonshine of a gay June night
To Myron's chamber impudently came.
She kissed his lips, and shook her shining hair
In fragrant showers about her blushing face;
She waltzed and laughed and frolicked round his chair
In sweet fantastic ecstasy of love;
A princess in her attitude and eyes—
A princess thinly clad in fleecy robes,
That slipt low down and floated on the air.
Seductive Moonshine! Chastity can melt
A poet's passion with a swifter touch
Than warmer kisses of the Venus mouth!
Her gauzy skirts, that touched him as she passed,
Brushed out a sigh of pleasure from his lips.
The unsophisticated poet warmed
Beneath caresses that would freeze a nun.
The verdant rhymster (like his brother bards,
Too evidently modest) wore his heart

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Suffused in fire upon his blushing cheeks.
So modest was he, that he turned away
From modern fancy millinery goods
In windows airing; turned his back upon
All clothes lines, populous of linen things
With feminine cognomens and strange cuts.
But here he sat, with neither power nor will
To break the spell. The wicked princess talked,
And he replied, bewitched beyond the power
Of modest silence, 'til the dialogue
Grew fast and dangerous. He forward reached
To clasp the saucy princess in his arms;
But, saints and angels! what a sudden change!
Beyond his reach the laughing princess stood,
Her dexter finger on her fairy nose,
Gyrating with provoking wickedness.
All round the room, where e'er his 'wildered eyes
In question wandered, linen wonderments
Assailed them with reproaches. Hisses fell
In showers upon his ears. A perfect storm
Of silver laughs, unquestionable coughs,
And rapid running gossip of sweet lips
Assailed, affrighted and confounded him.
"A lady's chamber! By the chastity
Of all the Greek Dianas! How is this?
How came I here? What deviltry has wrought
This rascal joke to play upon my wits?
But let those laugh who win—I'm going West
Without much preparation or delay.

I'll take an inventory of these ghouls :
First, here's a dozen ghosts in petticoats ;
Ten ghosts in hoops with nothing else to wear ;
Five saucy ghosts in night-gowns, long and short ;
Five ghosts in corsets, fairly cut in twain—
Their busts and bodies floating on the air,
Linked as a whole by nothing visible ;
Ten gutta-percha probabilities,
Or sample bosoms of the ' coming girl ;'
Ten ghosts of ' Grecian bends,' legitimate,
With nicely twisted, sweetly crooked spines."
All these he noted in his rapid glance,
Then called a hack and hurried to the cars.

* * * * *

The screaming whistle and the rattling rails
In chorus joined, to cheer him on the road ;
To brush his courage up, and drive away
The mem'ry of the ghosts he'd left behind.
The silvery sound of voices came to him,
Like bird-notes, floating through the hazy light
That dimly veiled the manner of the car—
The merry talk of ladies, who rehearsed
Some tender gossip in their merry moods ;
But in the dimness of the doubtful light
They seemed the echoes of those ghostly lips
From which he vainly tried to run away.
Confusedly the voices touched his ears,
And mingled with the visions of his brain.
To make confusion worse, the coming day

Dashed spectral lights and shadows in his eyes.
Against the windows, weird and grinning ghosts
Their noses flattened, pressed their wizard lips,
And made themselves unpleasantly at home.
Like emerald ribbons, all along the road
The grasses streamed and fluttered brilliantly;
The morning-glories, blue and snowy white,
The golden lilies and the crimson phlox,
In lines of beauty ran along the ground,
Ingrained upon the sober field of sand,
An endless carpet. Here his visions danced,
And all his ghosts fantastic skinned along
To keep the cars. They winked and grinned at him;
They laughed and shouted in a hundred keys,
That rose above the rattling of the rails.
Up rose the sun, and with a sudden breath,
Blew out the twilight—all the fairies fled,
And Myron turned to common life again.
The climax of the wonderful was reached!
For right before him in her proper form,
The moonshine princess of his last night's dream
Stood smiling on him, rosy as the morn.
No misty grace to flutter round his chair,
And yet avoid the touch of finger ends.
Her cheeks were roses of the Juno tint,
Suffused on alabaster, and her lips
Red cups of wine o'erspilling at the brims.
Her breasts are pearly white, which signifies
Sweet chastity, the light and joy of life.

The ruby rose that burns upon her lips
So modestly, is fire compelling fire.
The sapphire of her heavenly tinted eyes
Denotes the fullness of perpetual blue
That globes the distance to a floating sphere,
Thus giving fullness, purity and fire,
The trinity of love.
Unhappy Myron, drowned in too much sweet,
A fly in amber slain for beauty's sake.
The whisperings in musical, sweet notes
Stirred all the air; but Myron held his ear
Against the cushion, strove to shut them out,
But strove in vain—the air was full of them.
The cushion had a hundred tongues for one,
And every tongue was tipped with silvery notes.
How busy all the women were in speech;
How all their methods gathered toward themselves;
They talked of "woman," "woman"—nothing else,
As if the destinies of all the earth
Were in the hollow of her little hand.
The substance of their egotistic talk
Condensed would be in sentences like these:

"A woman is the highest art of God,
His perfect work of wisdom and design."
The feminine is but th' incarnate form
Of Beauty, personate for men to love,
Who have no faith in any higher force
Than human senses—those who worship facts—

"Incarnate Beauty is God's pilot here."

This last remark evoked the latent heat
Of Myron's cynicism. Turning short,
With captious energy he caught the words,
"God's pilot," full upon his flippant tongue,
And echoed them with sharp asperity.
Arresting Josie's eye, he gravely said:

"Did Emerson get down upon his knees,
Caress the feet of woman, and receive
Her special blessing for that utterance?"

The merry converse of the ladies' lips
Abruptly ceased, and all the speakers turned
To the intruder, with inquiring eyes.
A moment's pause, and then a silvery voice,
In brief reply:

"No; merely this: The poet's eyes beheld
Essential beauty hand in hand with God.
Sententiously he made a note of it;
He feigns contempt of cant, as others do;
He merely set an exclamation point
To music, which is art, not poetry."

Then Myron, somewhat testily, replied:

"With master touch, he deftly plays upon
Your vanity, credulity, or pride."

The lady answered with a pleasant smile :

“Credulity is faith's simplicity
And perfect rest ; it, therefore, pleases us,
And has our preference to learned doubt.”

The poet sneered, and very drily said :

“We get much folly through our gift of faith ;
In fact, it is the wisdom of the weak,
Who never know the luxury of thought,
The sin of it is taught them in a creed
More learned than a Hegel or a Boehme
Have dreamed of in their ‘mystic heresy.’”

Not dropping half her smile, the lady said :

“We lose much wisdom through our want of faith—
That wisdom specially which reaches God,
Which means the good in all, in time, in place,
In things worth living for—in you and I—
In brotherhoods and sisterhoods supreme.”

He answered slowly, measuring his words :

“God save us here ! This wisdom is a waste.
A woman's wisdom comes to her through love,
Which means of man. Her weakness is her own ;
Her strength is stolen, or a gift of sin,

To mortify her sex. If it be true
That God has set her loveliness apart
As consul to his own Divinity,
You will not blame us if we blush or weep
To see His angel roughing it below,
In coarseness and perversity of will,
To emulate our masculinity.
The breast cut off to set the sword-arm free,
Would leave the Amazon a hideous scar."

The lady met his flippant speech half way :

" You compliment yourself with less of grace
Than art well disciplined. To drag us down
To level of your mannish egotism ;
Is touchingly complaisant to our sex.
The world is full of feeble-minded men,
Unripe in righteousness of charity,
Unskilled in reading what the Master writes.
Perversely blind, you mystify yourselves ;
And, when you read the record upside down,
You cry, ' Phenomenal ! phenomenal !'
You call your skepticism reason, and your doubt
A sentiment ; but this is sophistry,
To hide your weakness or beguile your wits."

The poet felt a pleasure in her speech,
Well pleased was he to find the lady's wit
A match for his, if not a master force ;

But he was nothing if not skeptical,
And so he answered in his normal mood :

"Your work is like the sculpture in 'high art'—
Greek statues mainly—too much Greek for use :
White Magdalens washed clean enough for cant.
You fret the modest marble of your faith
To beautify a worn-out ugliness.
In sculptured Eves, you still repeat in stone
...The long-exploded libel on your sex.
The truth is whiter than the whitest lie.
If you are changing in position now,
'Tis owing to the ether baths wherein
You wash credulity to sprout her wings.
'Tis not the woman, but the women now—
The sects, and not the sex—that calls us out.
The sex has ruled us with its love so long,
We blush and dare not meet the sects in arms.
Your voice on sounding boards is not so sweet ;
'Tis keyed in sharps, that all the world may hear ;
We listen with regret, and close our lips."

The lady took the challenge, and replied :

"'Tis ever so with skeptics of your class ;
Though your opinions have but little weight.
There was a time when women had no law
Nor gospel worth the having ; had no life
That history would stoop to gather up,

Except to curse and fling away again.
But she is stronger now; she reaches out
And grasps the roll of hist'ry with firm hands;
She makes her record, and no thanks to you."

The poet framed his temples with his hand,
And coolly said:

"The newest style of sex—
A woman with a man in her—that's good!
A sweet, potential, and audacious sex;
But cold as frost-work on Mt. Ceni's peak.
Warm hearts are frozen by your icy touch,
As frosted steel will wound the foolish lips
That cling to it. But go your way, and win.
We'll praise the beauty of your shining hair;
We'll shout hosannas till the echoes crack;
Wave handkerchiefs and hats, and make much noise
With canes and boot heels in your audience rooms.
We'll smother you with rare and costly gifts,
And shriek 'Encore! encore!' Flash out, O stars!
Yet all the while we'll whisper to ourselves,
'If there were any summer in her blood,
We might be blest; but, being merely ice,
We'll glorify the master work of frost,
And freeze contented.'"

A voice, deep sounding like an organ's base,
With solemn emphasis and pious drawl,
Arrested him, and smother'd him with noise:

“ Too much of hearts with Venus’ blood in them ;
Too much of hands that itch for clasp of love ;
Too much of eyes with earth-mold on their lids,
Earth in their waters, earth in all their light ;
Too much of lips o’ercrusted with the lees
Of carnal use, like medicated wine
Upon a dead man’s mouth. Too much ! too much !
Fie on such weaknesses ; they are for those
Who never dare look upward to the sun,
Nor aim a thought above the undergrowth
Of vulgar use. Far better ice and frost,
That glint their light on St. Elia’s peak,
Than melting guano on the marish pool.
Warm mud is filthy ; ice is ever clean.”

The poet turning saw a mountain man—
A hill of flesh, obese to ugliness,
Profuse in white cravat of pious cut,
Two monster chins that waddled in their grease,
And flabby lips that approbate the chin.
His eyes were holes sunk deep into the flesh ;
His girth would make a heavy stall-fed ox
O’er-jealous of his honors in the mart.
The poet measured him, and, bowing, said :

“ Too much of stomachs that have earthly needs ;
Too much of bowels that encoil the world
Within their vast, compassionate expanse.”



The stomach laughed, and 'all the ladies smiled
In concert with it. Many left their seats
And gathered round the lordly adipose.
They kissed it on the forehead and the eyes,
And filliped, playfully, the double chin.
Then one of them, a lady of fair mein,
Attractive face, and pleasant in her speech,
Leaned on the mountain's shoulder while she said :

" Cold-blooded cynic ! has sweet friendship's fire
No inspiration in't ? no warmth, no life ?
Platonic love is pure as Heaven's air,
And beautiful as jasper." He replied :

" Platonic love, as Plato fashioned it,
Was military-Mormonism ; no less.
In later times it has another name.
At best, 'tis but a halo improvised
To glorify a sickly sentiment."

The lady pouted, sneered, and then replied :

" I pity you, and thank the better world
That few such warts deform its loveliness.
Callosities of such a class are few,
And rare enough to be phenomenal."

The poet shrugged his shoulders and looked up,
As though in admiration of the cord

That ran along the ceiling of the car.
The bell rope gave him silent audience.

“ Puissant Cant! thou has become the god
That all men worship, under all the names
Their passions, interest, fancies may suggest;
Their mightiness or meanness may require.
The demagogue, the hero, and the saint,
The wildest dreamer and the sagest sage,
Together kneel and kiss thy sovereign toe,
And fraternize in madness at thy feet.
Love hides its head, and patriotism weeps,
True honor blushes at his synonyms,
And Christ is made a stalking horse for knaves.”

The mountain turned upon him with a stare
Of holy horror, wiped its greasy eyes
To intimate that they had learned the trick
Of crockodilish tears, then bellowed deep :

“ Is love a fraud ? religion all a farce ?
Is patriotism but a sounding brass ?
No! thank the Lord; there's love enough for all,
And friendship free and chaste as morning dew,
That martyrs all our heavy weight of flesh.
The world can boast its honest patriots
Who, for their country, gave heroic lives,
Unselfishly ; around whose honored shrines
We hang our offerings and shed our tears.”

"Yes," cried the poet, throwing out his hands
As if to check a torrent with his palms.
"Yes; all men have this fury of the brain.
The bloody Turk, who cuts a Christian's throat,
Dies well for Allah and his filthy tents.
You Christians can annihilate a race
To civilize its bones. The savage gives
A nation as a single offering
To heroize 'their altars and their fires.'
The Romans played it and the older Greeks;
And both are witnesses of how the wrong
May seem the right on lips of sounding brass.
Even stolid England, has it to excess
In British gold and sharp diplomacy;
Ill-natured Ireland has intensified
Its normal hatred in heroic wrath;
Unruly Poles have shrieked for liberty
To cut each other's throat, and, shrieking, died.
Behold those Golgothas that fright the world!
Great mountains of men's bones, long lines of skulls
That girt the earth in ridges, like bare hills;
That mock the sunlight with their hideous glore!
These in the holy name of Christ were built—
Those for Mahomet gave their useless lives;
But each disowns the monument with shame.
Is't yours, good Christian? is this mountain yours?
No! Verily, then, history is a liar!"

The women stood in blank astonishment,

While Adipose held up his fatty hands
And rolled his heavy eyes through all their grease
In holy consternation. "Blasphemy!"
His fatness shouted in wheezy voice :

"The brutal skeptic is the natural foe
Of faith, religion, nature, God, and truth.
His logic spends its Lilliputian force
In sounding epithets; his reason leaps
From wrong to wrong, still beating on its breast
To keep its fury up, or dash its brains
Against the adamant wall upreared
By Holy Scripture. Love is nature's gift,
And so are faith, and hope, and charity;
And, being so, are justified by God."

The tireless skeptic promptly met him here :

"And so are hate, and tyranny, and lust
The gifts of nature; therefore, as you say,
Are justified by God. Impetuous logic!
Mar-plot theories of meddling men,
To smudge her cleanly work with dirty hands,
That not a line is clear of interlines
On nature's page. Your faith is 'As you will'—
A sweet convenience, saving wear and tear
Of frontal brain. An ounce of sturdy faith
Will medicate the muscles of a brain
Into a theologic brawler of much noise.
An ounce of thought would kill him on the spot."

The man of flesh sublimely waved his chin,
Turned heavily upon his narrow seat,
And, peevishly adjusting his cravat,
Abstractedly labored with another thought :

“ The nearing future shows a clearer field,
Wherein is builded, ready to our hands,
The practical-ideal of our dreams.
The Christ is here. No man Christ, as of old ;
But woman, crowned and reaching toward the earth ;
Presenting blessings with her precious hands,
Love on her lips, and music in her voice.
Amen and hallelujah ! She has come
To rule and bless and beautify the world.”

Much reddened in the face, and much bedewed
With moisture oleaginous, he ceased.
The ladies bowed. The mischief of their mirth
Made but a ripple on their courtesy.
Miss Josie Frankness, rising from her seat,
Addressed the poet with a graceful smile :

“ Excuse me, sir ; some one or all of us
Have made a blunder here. Our friendly jar
Entitles you to closer confidence.”

Then, gracefully, she indicated each
And all the persons of her traveling set,
And introduced them by their several names :

"Miss LUCY BOMBAZINE, M.D., our pill ;
Miss HATTY LEGAL, counselor at law ;
Lyoma's pet geologist, Miss STONE ;
Miss LIBBY WOOD, our native architect ;
Miss EASEL GRAPHIC, artist, paints in oil ;
Her Honor Mrs. AUDLY, governor,
The best-beloved of all Lyoma's loves ;
Professor LORDLY, *alias* D.D."

The mountain blushed, as mountains sometimes will
When playful sunlight kisses them, and rose :

"Permit me, sir, to introduce our friend
Miss JOSIE FRANKNESS, congressman-at-large—
In fact, but not in form ; in two days more
The ballot will record our prophecy."

The poet bowed to each, gave each a smile,
Then introduced himself as MYRON BLANK,
And entered freely in their mutual talk.
The fat Professor, growing eloquent,
Rehearsed his piece about Utopia ,
Whereat the ladies laughed without restraint.
The Doctor Bombazine, to check the laugh,
Stooped gracefully above the double chin,
And naively said :

"Most eloquently done ;
We kiss your feet, Adonis ; take our thumbs."

Too dull to see the wit, or approbate

A comfortable jest, the Lordly beast
Replied :

“ I see Miss Bombazine was born
Too near the summit of Mount Metaphor ;
I take your thumbs to keep the compliment.”

The poet marked the unexpected flush
That reddened all the fat of Lordly's face.
Could one so prominently written “ sham ”
Retain enough of decency to blush ?
What ugly secret leaped into the light ?
Who spoke so plain—simplicity or sin ?
To all of which no answer could he give,
And being vexed that he had vexed his thought,
He turned his seat to face the lady JOE :

“ A candidate for congress, if I heard
And understood the Lordly doctor's words ? ”

“ My friends would have it so ; their will is law.
And I obey it, though the heavens fall.
I walk not blindly on this devious road ;
I mark each step and measure all the way.
There are some quicksands, many a marshy spot,
And, here and there, deep furrows in the soil.
I may be over-bold in thought and speech—
Too sanguine in my faith—perhaps 'tis so ;
But I had rather miss the good I wish
Than miss myself in missing what is less.
'Tis woman's work to keep your rooms aright,

Elicit order out of anarchy,
To scrub, to polish, and to harmonize."

The poet smiled demurely, as a saint
Who sees a joke too sacred for a laugh :

" You are too fragile for our Herculese.
The nation's stable needs an arm of brawn,
And boots with hob nails half a finger's length
To hold their footing. Gaiters are too thin ;
And alabaster arms too sensitive
To spider touches in the galleries."

With sudden pressure, somewhat passionate,
The lady's hand caressed the little glove
That lay so softly nestled in her lap :

" 'Tis woman's work to sweep the encumbered walls,
And free the galleries of spider-webs.
Where dust accumulates and dirt abounds,
We'll cleanse it all, and fill the place with flowers.
Where slang and clamor, epithet and curse,
Confound the ears and stun propriety,
We'll teach politeness and a softer voice."

He tossed his head to throw his hair aside :

" Perhaps in half a century or more
You'll hold the weight of power in those halls,
And then the hope of change may fairly bloom ;

But now, one pair of gaiters in a press
Of congress boots were safer without toes.
Our congressmen are gallant in their way;
But then their way is not a woman's way.
They wrangle for a wager; cut and thrust,
And have an itching for each other's throat.
A rough set, lady—scrupulously rough—
With clamorous inelegance of speech.
Their winks are wicked, and their finger ends
Are deadlier poison than a serpent's tooth;
Their rude combative elbows have much skill
In roasting honorable ribs."

A voice boomed over them that filled the car,
Deep, sonorous and heavy in its bass:

"A prophecy! a prophecy! not writ in blood,
But on the garments of the Prince of Peace.
Lo! woman coming! all things point to her.
I read the future—conquest without blood!"

The lawyer checked him more to stay the noise
Than to reply to his inanities:

"No civic change was ever wrought in peace;
Religion even has a bloody robe."

The mountain felt the mouse within its flesh,
And would not settle 'till the mouse was born:

Silver bells ringing in the air
And my heart was full of the
I looked at my hand and it
seemed just as if

Half an Hour.

21

"You twist your logic disingenuously,
To make the causes stand for the effects.
The heathen sword was red with Christian blood ;
They slew the children of the Lord in rage,
Both making prophecy and sealing it.
To read the future is the gift of God,
And blood or peace, is still a prophecy—
The grace of God's foreknowledge touching man."

The fair-faced doctor touched him on the chin,
And stopped his noise :

"Here's much ado about a vein or so ;
The lancet or the lance ; what matters it ?
Both have their uses in a healing way.
A nation's blood grows feverish and hot ;
Conjest its brain, and, lo ! the victim dies
Unless some skillful surgeon cut a vein."

The pleasant lady governor replied :

"Ah, doctor, you are too professional ;
A bleeding world would be a work of art
To you and yours—a case of surgery
For neophytes to speculate upon.
Miss Brief is right ; all revolutions come
Through strife and blood where men have ushered them ;
But woman's life, in all the warring past,
Has been a life of peace ; and, as she rose

To reach the knees of bloody-handed man,
She begged for peace ; when high enough to reach
The mailed arm, her prayer was still for peace.
Now, as an equal, thought to thought she stands
To make and to administer the law ;
Now, while her voice is leaping round the world,
That world will hear no other prayer but peace.
She speaks for peace ; she votes for peace ; she works,
And waits, and hopes, and prophecies for peace."

The poet bowed, not to the argument,
Nor to the governor, but to the face
So beautifully mild—so kindly good—
So eloquently simple in its love.
He yearned to kiss the gentle lady's hand
And call her "mother." This he dare not do ;
And so, content within himself, he said :

" If ever love comes down to dwell with man—
To teach him charity and tender peace—
She'll wear thy image, lady—be like thee
In all the dignity of gentleness,
The grace of beauty, and the soul of love."

Then, turning to the lady JOE, he said :

" A noble woman is your governor."

In whispers low and furtive she replied :

" Few know her antecedents, save within

The last ten years or so. A widow she
Of many years—that is for one so young.
One child she grieves for—lost in infancy,
How lost, I know not; that she never tells;
But wraps the sorrow in a mystery.
We love her dearly—almost worship her.
All who have sorrows lay them in her lap,
And she forgets her own to soften theirs.
In all Lyoma, not a single voice
Will mention her except with blessed words,
And earnest tears of gratitude and love.”

Subdued and silent sat the poet then,
While busy chat went round from lip to lip.
The lively laughter and the stream of words
Came to him, like low voices in a dream,
Articulate but dim; save when the bass
Of Lordly's stentor voice, with heavy swell,
Weighed down the lighter cadences and broke
The silver thread of speech.

“Lyoma!” cried the brakesman; then a halt,
A quick, sharp rattle ran along the cars;
And with it brought a quiver and a jar,
And all was still. Each went his sev'ral way.
The lady JOSIE, speaking as she rose,
And smiling as she spoke, just said, “Good bye.”
She touched his hand, as rose leaves touch the air,
Drew down her veil to dry her tear-wet eyes,

And vanished. Next the doctor stiffly bowed;
The mountain crushed him with a lofty nod.
The governor, with open hand, was last;
Her clasp was truthful, tender, full of love.

"I hope we meet again. You journey West?"

The poet took her gently by the hand,
And with the saddest humor, smiling, said:

"To find the terminus of iron rails,
Or of this useless life."—

"Then come with me: There's much in life to do.
Perhaps I'll keep you to some useful aim.
I'm old enough for counsel, and have friends."

He kissed her hand—to him a mother's hand;
Then followed her with many earnest thanks.

Once more the whistle gave its signal shriek;
The iron links complained—the heavy wheels
Rolled slowly onward, quickening as they moved;
Then faster, faster leaping on the rails,
The laughing coaches threw the village back
And fled away.

CHAPTER II.

A filthy den, with bare and broken walls;
A ceiling low, and black, and water stained.
The naked laths, with diabolic mirth,
Grinned fiercely at the rotten tufts of hair.
Between their teeth, like murderers in chains,
The skeletons of monster spiders hung.
On broken stools, around a broken stand,
Five persons were arranged, with pipes and beer.
Upon the highest stool—substantial stool—
Professor Lordly, nursing all his flesh,
Serenely sat. With heavy sound of bass,
The Lordly brute addressed the filthy set:

“Her time is near at hand, her days are few;
The Lord will visit her consumingly,
And choose from out his Israel a man.”
A woman rule in Israel? ‘No,’ saith the Lord;
‘For I will take this yoke from off your necks.
In presence of the oil the yoke shall petrify.’
Pat Murphy! listen, now, with all your ears.
Lo! he that hath a good wife hath a joy;—
She seeketh not high places, nor sits down
In councils of the men; nor is she heard

Among the wranglers on election day.
But such is Frankness; loud, among the men
On platforms, speaking with a shameless face.
Your Bridget is not so. Her modesty
Is as the spikenard in its summer bloom—
'An incense to my nostrils,' saith the Lord.
Shall Bridget live unnoticed and alone?
Shall Kate and Maggie in their shanties sit,
Or labor at the tub, while Franknesses
Are riding in their coaches up and down
The avenues that reach our capital?"

Pat Murphy, rising suddenly, exclaimed:

"Be jabbers, no! yer spakin like a mon;
Mud turtles that we are, to have it so,
And not be thinkin' av our rights the while.
Shure, Bridget has the vote as good as ony;
And Molly Turf, and Dolly Draggletail,
Tim Krewkins' Bet, O'Flanner's widdy, Kate,
And all the gurrels down in Muddy Lane.
Hurrah! cushla machree! Erin go bragh!
Yer hilth, ye tub o' grase, yer hilth!"

Next, Mully Bull, who cultivated dogs,—
He trained bull-terriers for sporting men.
On either side him sat a hungry dog,
With bullish mouth and water-breeding eyes.
The master seemed more brutish than the dogs.

Square jaws, hare lip, and ever snarling teeth,
Cold eyes, that slunk beneath a shag of hair,
Limbs lopping round in sluggish attitude,
To emulate the manner of the "ring."
In sullen voice the brutal man of dogs:

"Dang all ea vomen's right int' t' ditch;
Bull pups is trump, and gudenow for me.
I've fout 'em in the 'all, and won 'em, too,
Afore our shemale guv'ner coom'd in 'ere
To neat 'em hup, and make 'em put on shirts
Too white an' hellegant for dogs. But 'ere's yer 'ealth,
Yer oiliness; these 'ere, they drinks yer 'ealth."

Then, slowly turning to his waiting dogs,
He gave to each a drink, then drank himself.
Next came John Norris, born a Polish Jew,
Whom cards, and dice, and indolence, and beer
Had stupefied and stunted to a fool
Who deemed himself a knave. A stolid wretch,
With mouth libidinous and swollen eyes.
His wife monopolized the family brains.
In all Lyoma was her name renowned,
Yea, over all the land from West to East,
And northward, to the cities of the lakes--
The female Brutus of America!
For drunkenness she mulct her errant spouse
In heavy fine, imprisonment and cost,
Besides a curtain lecture of four hours.

This merciless sweet wooing made him tame
 About his house, as humble as a cat
 Who yields, but spits on all within her reach.
 But here, among his friends, he lifts his head;
 He struts and swaggers like an unchained dog.

" Mine guntrymen not make so many fuss
 About en vomen's rights; ve knocks 'em down
 Mit heavy fist, gelaughin all der vile;
 Ve makes 'em cook, und scrub, und feed der bigs;
 Dey earns de liben, vile we schmokes der bipe,
 Drinks beer, und sleepin in der grocery.
 Yaw, wohl, das ist der best, und here's your health."

Great Adipose stroked down his wattled chin:

" Saint Paul is right; if women wish to learn,
 Their husbands are their teachers; let them ask
 Their lords and masters—hear, and then obey.
 The German mind, magnetic in its force,
 Points ever to the polar mystery.
 Its irreligion proves its sanctity
 In psychologic sense—that is—I mean,
 Or rather should remark (the d—m German mind.)
 Ahem! this Frankness is a Yankee born,
 Blue veined and proud as a Plantagenet,
 A Puritan who went to school 'out West.'
 The Mayflower model which the pilgrims saw
 (And nothing else) for many fruitful months,

Impressed itself indellibly upon
Six generations of the Plymouth stock ;
You see it in the oval of her face,
The bounding movements of her general form,
The billowy motions of her swelling breasts,
The outline of her instep, which is formed
Upon the Mayflower model, like the rest.
The Lord is patient, and his 'mills grind slow ;'
Which means the Bridgets, with their heavy fists,
Will grind the Franknesses to nothingness,
In God's appointed way. What saith the Word :
'Let woman's tongue keep silence in the church.'
'Tis shameful for a woman to give tongue
Before her master in the public place.
Behold ! this woman sets her dainty foot
Upon the neck of Paul ; her little hand
Is on the Apostle's mouth. Shall such things be ?"

A face so white, it simulated death,
Peered through the heavy smoke, and struck your eyes,
As cold and deadly as a spectre's hand ;
Its teeth were whiter, colder than the face ;
Its grin a stab ; its eyes two dagger points ;
Its speech was thin and gasping, like the cough
Men catch who visit dust infected vaults :

"I represent a class who know their rights,
And feel their strength—they poll two thousand votes.
Our women hold the balance in their hands.

They will not dare to use their privilege?
By G—d they will! ha! who will dare object?
Two thousand harlots cast their votes as one,
And rule the land! I counsel them to this.
Yes, I, and such as I, will throttle you,
And choke your chastity until it gasps;
Make virtue hateful, vice respectable,
And slay religion on her altar cloth.
Two thousand harlot ballots are for sale.
I'm authorized to sell, and guarantee
Delivery! Two thousand harlot votes!
Who bids? For you, one thousand dollars gold?
Is that your highest? fifty cents a head?
Fool! bid all your fat, throw in your piety,
Scrape all the contribution boxes clean
Of golden bribes, of silver compliments,
And copper-colored alms; coin all your gods
To golden dollars; pawn the Holy Grail,
The golden meat dish set with emeralds,—
You're still a fool! One million is our price."

While men of coarser nerves and baser needs
Were stung with shame, disgusted and alarmed,
The Lordly sham serenely sat and smiled.

"Lo, every man will say he is my friend;
But friends in name are seldom friends in need.
The man who giveth riches, he hath friends.
The golden dollars that you covet so;

Are they rewards of merit or free gifts?
The wise man doth not question with his eyes
These hidden matters—selah! neither boast
Too openly. Mysterious are the ways
Of politics. To sell is easy, sir, is cheap,
But pledges must be given said the Lord.
Behold, I've written on this little waif
A word of wisdom for you—read it, sir.”

He dropt the paper on the broken stand,
But instantly Pat Murphy's club came down
And held it firm. The lecher glared at him,
His fingers clutched the dagger at his belt;
The dastard trembled, while the assassin grinned.
The chin forgot its grease, the wattles paled
A shade or two, and crawled uneasily.

“Howld! none o' that; be all the powers of mud
I'll make your jowl a hansum double crash!
Jist lave it so; now rade it—lowder, sir!
Ouch, holy mither! half a million gowld
For harlot votes! Look here, ye spotted snake,
Me mither was an honest woman, sir;
And so 's me father, Bridget, and the rhest
Good catholics, and hate your nastiness.
You bring your cattle! By the holy cross
I'll punch your head! I will, be dad, I will!
Jist show your ugly mug on 'lection day
Wid those two thousand harlots at your heels,

And Pathrick Murphy, wid his single arm,
Will knock yees into Michaelmas, he will!"

The lecher's eyes gleamed fiercely in their hate,
His words came hissing through his shining teeth:

"Hard names are merely waste of time and breath.
Our mortal enemy is chastity.
We hate your honest wives, for they are shams
Your virtuous women have such tender ears,
So quick to catch an unconventional word.
Pack all such ears with cotton at the polls.
How chaste we are when covered with white robes;
How artfully we shrink, and grasp our skirts."

The bull dog trainer shied the lecherous thief,
And placed himself behind his growling pups.
John Norris pushed his broken stool away
And shrugged his ruffian shoulders in disgust.
Pat Murphy's fingers tightened round his club;
He looked the picture of the "peep o' day,"
But Lordly sat unmoved, his eyes half closed,
And seemed contented, thinking, or asleep.
Soft through the fatty tissues of his lips
The bass notes of his gutt'ral voice was heard:

"'In all thy works, keep the pre-eminence,'
Ecclesiasticus hath wisely said.
My friend the Roper loves two thousand strong,

The party with the golden argument.
For filthy lucre? No! but fair success.
My friend the Norris hath a double sight;
The Lord hath given him to see two ways.
No sickly sentiment hath heaven devised
To make him lean with too much lacking will.
Friend Mully Bull your heart is with your dogs;
You let them strive together for your gain,
And that is also wisdom. Let them strive
In all their beauty on the morrow night,
When Frankness holdeth forth in foolish words."

The man of dogs shrunk further from the stand:

"Nay, dang me if I loike it watches club
To't brain um handy; dost take me for a foal?
I'm na the chicken thou 'ast betted hon;
I would na gie one luggie pup o' moine
For a' the bitches yon foregatherin wolf
Can howl aroun' im, be 't white or black."

If you could melt a ton of adipose,
The mountain would have melted instantly;
But all his grease resisted, and he turned
To wheedle Murphy to a better mood.

"Thy people, Murphy, are they not our flesh?
Have not thy people hearts and hands as clean
As any in the land? How dare you sit

In sinful silence, when the Mother Church,
With fierce anathemas denounces all
Such shameful heresies? St. Paul contemned
A woman at the altar, loud in mass.
A priest in petticoats! heaven save the mark!
A woman lording over Israel, and you
Sit like a stoughten bottle—hem—I mean
Inert as hasty pudding--um—as lead."

Impatient Murphy opened suddenly:

"Och! divil a care I care for Israel,
Or any av thim crucifyin' Jews.
Bedad, I'm thinkin' twice afore I spake.
This gutter snipe--this spalpeen av the ditch—
This lap o' nastiness! Be gorra, sir,
I'll niver take me wimmin if he's there
Wid all his schreechin harlots in a line.
Oules-ferninst—me Bridget wants a row;
I'll hould her bonnet wid me sparrin' fist
And whack the divil wid the other."

The lecher sneered; his white and glistening teeth
In perfect neatness damned th' attempted smile,
And broke it to a most satanic grin.

"The law is blind to class, and, fair or foul,
Your women or my women, all alike
Will have the ballot with unquestioned right.
The black and white, the spotted and the pure,

The sinner and the saint, the coarse and fine,
The magdalen, the maiden, and the wife.
Shall law relax because some men have wives
Exceptionally honest? or because
One woman in a crowded city owns
A husband who is accidentally chaste?
If men as base as I, and you, and you,
And all of us, and other millions more,
Can vote because they wear a hat—
Because they sneer, pay taxes and get drunk,
Wherefore are women banned and barred the right
By hoggish grunts of hogs, like you and I.
Discourage from the polls? Brayed at by mules
Abroad in breeches; hissed by coiling snakes
All male—all labeled men, with tongues and hearts of men—
I tell you, fool! by all the sheeted ghosts
Of women damned through man's infernal lust—
By every living witness of his wrongs,
The 'social evil' women cast their votes!
They'll vote their wills, or kill the right to vote
That other women seek, whoe're they be.
Hell! shall the righteous cant of this vile world
Make wrong its own excuse for other wrong,
And cruelty excuse for cruelty?
Your taunts and threats are lost upon our ears.
We hold no converse with you save for gold.
We buy and sell you as our common stock,
For lucre's sake. Your easy virtue serves
Our virtuous convenience and our time.

The logic of the outcast has its rules
By which it makes meek charity its slave.
Plain words are best—our ballots are for sale.
The vestal Frankness deems herself too pure
To purchase eminence with lies or gold.
Poor little fool! does she expect to wade
In social mud and keep her slippers clean?
Well, then, your Fatness, I must sell to you,
As agent for the party that you serve.
A compact, then; I hold thee to thy bond
For half a million money to be paid
Upon delivery of votes—no votes, no pay.
You take the risk; in winning, you win all;
In losing, you lose all; I take no risk.
Yea, verily, I hold thee to thy bond.
I will not fail—or, if I do, by h—ll!
A frightful ruin follows; such a crash
As men will shudder at and women blanche,
Nor dare to look upon. I dare not fail!
Trust not in dreams—fulfill the legal bond.
Fail, and you die! remember, I have said.
Nay, more to thee: deceit is certain death!
And here is wisdom, Mully Bull, for thee:
Say not we're on't, that is a ruffian's speech;
Thou liest! selah! keep thy tongue low down;
The bite of pups will leave a scarlet mark.
Malicious slander breaks its feather's head.
Eschew much talk, keep closely to thy dogs.
And here is wisdom to our celtic friend:

The use of staves insures a broken head,
And anger bringeth crimson from the nose.
Let us have peace—'tis safer for the skin."

"Hip! is't a bloody nose ye mane? Bedad,
That's me best houl't; me name is Murphy, sir,
And where's the mon to step upon me coat,
And have the larnin' in his crazy bones
To wear it afther? Yees may frighten Bull,
And blarney Norris, wid yer grasy tongue,
And buy this snakin' bl'guard wid yer gould,
But deal a flicker is there in ould Dart.
Good bye 'till yees. I'll fetch O'Shaughnessy
And Phil O'Rourke, and by the kith O'Kane,
We'll clane yees out in half an oyster's wink."

Pat Murphy's threat sufficed. Each ruffian fled
In haste and under cover of the night.
So when the doughty champions returned,
The room was empty and the lights were out.

CHAPTER III.

Lyoma's Governor, in morning dress—
A simple robe of grayish purple silk—
Sat near the window. All the air was still
Except the winnow of a zephyr's wing.
And near the window, also, Myron sat.
They both seemed wrapt in gazing on the scene
Of marvellous beauty that beneath them lay.
An exclamation, here and there, escaped,
As glimpses of the landscape met their eyes:
Now up the valleys clad in trailing vines;
Now ranging further, where the mountains meet
And lean their heads against the rosy sky.
The cooling shadow of the approaching woods;
The cascade, leaping from its rocky stair;
The sweep of many songsters with bright plumes
That flash against the sunlight in their pride;
Perhaps a herd of antelope is seen
Across the sunpath on the mountain side,
A moment seen, then in the shadow lost.

"From this north angle of our residence
The whole fair region of Lyoma lies
Beneath us, like a garden of rare flowers."

The lady's voice was low and very sweet.
And he replied, while leaning on the sill :

“ A hurricane of talk sweeps through the street—
That breaks upon the quiet of the scene ;
Perhaps a ladies' fair—or baby show ?
There is a wind of gossip blown to us,
And oft repeated echoes of quick feet
That run along the air.”

The lady laughed, and, breaking words between
The fluttering spaces of her snowy fan,
Replied :

“ The polls are open ; people come
In all the clamor of their party zeal
To back their favorites. The ladies, fair,
And gentlemen who meet them with a smile,
In controversy join, express their thoughts,
Politely differ, smilingly agree,
Or pass with but the manner of a bow.
Each has his reason, each her answer gives,
And mix and mingle smoothly as the song
Of many birds. The liberty of speech
Is not a mere unmeaning epithet
But living truth—an active principle—
Where men and women meet on equal ground.”

The poet answered, speaking to the wind
As one who impolitely thinks aloud :

“The liberty of speech that parties claim
Is license to let loose their billingsgate;
To turn the vilest scolds upon the town
With never ceasing noise of rasping tongues,
The serpent hisses of especial hates,
The senseless clamor of unthinking mobs,
Unblushing lies and slander unrestrained.
They mold their deities from party mud,
And wreath their gods in artificial flowers,
And swear 'tis Purity with Beauty crowned;
Swell arrogant assumption with applause,
Call virtue, madness—honesty, a dupe,
And modest worth, an antiquated sham.”

The lady answered with an even voice:

“Lyoma is not Gotham, with its mob
Of reckless men who beat their natures blind
For lucre's sake, and kill for conscience sake.
The mob malignant that assails your ears
Is th' old rabble of unruly men
That in your recollection lingers still.
Sweet charity hath power to change all this,
And charity is clad in women's robes.
We lay our hand upon the rabble's mouth,
And it is still; we touch it with a smile,
And it is saved; annoint it with a kiss
And consecrate it to a work of love.”

The cynic, with a cruel sneer, replied:

"O! 'tis a change of dress that works the charm.
Lyoma has her rabble clad in silk—
Her demagogues in petticoats and pads!
Meek women with our man's perversities,
Whose great ambition is to wear the bell.
A most profane deformity of sex
With differential apposites of growth
Absurdly seeking their affinities!
I cannot *sense* it and must give it up."

The logic was beyond the gift of sense,
But might amuse the lady, if no worse:

"I fear you judge too harshly, when you judge
Lyoma's ladies by the coarser rules
That men apply to men. How near the truth
You get when weighing your worst qualities
Your better knowledge of yourselves must say.
Is man so base that e'en his presence soils
A lady's reputation by its caste?
If so, for God's sake cleanse yourselves at once
Or quit the earth. Shall we be damned because
Our brothers are unclean? More shame to you!
A woman's touch upon a ballot box
Can surely leave no stain, if all your hands
Have fouled it with your votes before she came.
The logic of man's politics is fraud;

His 'liberty' means 'license,' ours means 'light';
His 'voter' means 'a man,' ours 'all mankind';
His 'civil rights' and 'glorious privilege'
Are egotistic generalities,
With special application to himself.
His 'citizen' is only half the race—
The male half, and by far the dirtier half—
I'd rather be an Indian, not taxed,
Than such a citizen, were I a man.
The nomenclature of your politics
Must have a change and will be modified;
For as it stands, 'tis meaningless and void."

The cynic sighed forlornly, as he said:

"A pleasant prophecy—a hopeful change,
If only we dull masculines could see
The promised good. Alas! our 'eyes' are veiled—
We cannot, cannot see the coming light."

The lady answered with much earnestness:

"Perversely blind are those that will not see;
Most pitiful are those that cannot see;
But he who puts his eyes out in his rage,
Then gropes about in his self-darkened world
To touch a hand, is mercy's surest foil.
Seek blindness as a blessing, if you will,
Make sunlight madness, heaven's warmth a curse,

The white-wing'd hope a blackness dumb with fright,
And faith a Nemesis. Do this and die
To all the tender graces of a life
That heaven gives you as a 'joy forever.'
Man's confidence in woman is a grace
That sets him high above all other goods
That earth can give him. Love may sometimes drag
Her woman nature from its better height
To coarser level of his skepticism,
And make her seem less lovely than her kind.
So fire will melt the snow it cannot burn,
And make it simulate the muddy stream
That bears it helpless to the waiting sea.
A grievous sorrow with o'ermastering might
Drags God and Hope and Faith from out the sky,
And makes us doubt that even love exists.
But clouds are only drifts beneath the sun—
The sun shines on—his light is ever there;
His warmth unceasing while the earth is dark.
Hope on, and claim to-morrow as your joy,
And still to-morrow, till the sun appears."

The poet sighed; his eyelids felt the dew
Of honest tears suffusing tenderness
Through all his nature, pleading for the life
Of love—the angel that his wilfulness
Had driven out. He gazed upon that face,
So kindly gentle—face so motherly,
And speaking low, within himself, he said:

“Is this a mercy, miracle, or grace?
This face that loses all its earthly lines
Beneath some spiritual mystery?
Transfigured! losing all its earthly mold!
It draws me, calls me, beckons me away
From earthly lowness that I cannot lose,
And yet would lose, with rapture, if I could.
I’ve seen much Earth—some, beautiful, indeed,
But mostly common clay, of doubtful hue
And dangerous aptitudes. I’ve seen it crawl
With most ingenious elegance of dirt;
I’ve seen small atomies of painted clay
Impugning stars for want of light like theirs.
Some men might laugh at, others, pray for those.
I’ve seen the alabaster clay of babes
Thrown out upon the dirt-heaps of the world.
’Twas sad enough, I own, to wring a prayer
From any skeptic in the realms of doubt.
But did I pray? I never prayed till now!
I never knew the meaning of a prayer
Until I saw this God-commissioned face
Lean out of heaven to draw me to itself.”

With sudden speech, and words all wet with tears,
The lady caught him up in her reply:

“The earth is better here—there’s less of dirt;
None mixed with blood, and little for our tears,
Save confirmation tears to sweeten bliss.

We'll teach you prayer. The prayers may lift 'you up,
Albeit they do not call an angel down.
A face may win you, though it has no charm
Of features, though it want the given lines
Of grace and beauty that the artist needs.
Such faces are reflections of our loves
Cast from the mirror of our memory.
We've seen them somewhere. When our infant eyes
First opened on the light, that face, perhaps,
First met us—first impressed itself upon
The vacant page—first gave a glimpse of earth!
Who dare say 'no' of what's so little known?"

With swift preclusive motion of his hand
The poet checked her, and as quickly said:

"Suppose the face is but a fantasy—
The vision of a dream that comes unsought—
Enforced upon us, if we will or no;
How could we pray to such a visitor?"

In haste she met his question eagerly:

"If not a mem'ry, 'tis a special grace;
The vision of a love that yearns to you
From spirit-land, or heart still in the flesh.
Aye! such things are—you need not curl your lip;
Your wisdom prematurely plumes itself
With aphorisms; egotism learns

From egotism only. Modest faith
Runs toward the light, and welcomes with a kiss
Of cheerful recognition; clasps the face
Between the palms, and gives it some sweet name.
Forget your doubts; and, when you see a face,
Run toward it—hail it, cry aloud in joy
Some precious name—the name above all names
That stands forever waiting to be called,
Close at your heart. A blessing may descend
And wrap you in the glory of its light."

The cynic, for a moment, lost his wits
Through too much nature. "Nature puts us out,"
The artist said; "our art is too much rule."
Pure skepticism is art; it measures God,
And hangs Him up between the Entities
Impersonating Law. The cynic tript
Upon a fig leaf dropt from nature's lap.

"Oh, could I catch this vision by her robes,
I would not let her go. I'd clasp her close,
And cling about her neck until she solved
The secret of her presence in my dreams;
I'd call her mother! and repeat the name
Until she'd speak, or visit me no more."

The lady's cheek an instant paled, as though
The cold, reflected whiteness of a wing

Had touched her as it passed. With lips apart,
She seemed to question something in the air.

* * * * *

A sudden dash of music entered here
And stayed her speech. The flute and violin,
And women's voices rose in harmony.
The gentle softness of the women's steps,
The careful measure of the music timed,
The speech of silks that gossipped with the breeze,
Slipped through the lattice, cuddled in the nook,
As ladies whispering secrets in the room.
A long procession, women, two and two,
Kept time to music as they gaily marched.
And these were Josie's friends: they lined the walk
Along the eastern margin of the street;
Their party ribbons fluttered wickedly
Defiance to the ribbons 'cross the street.
Miss Bombazine, along the western side,
Led her procession with a queenly air,
In all the panoply of ribbons clad.
Each set her music to the party lines
To advertise her merit, (as men do).
Their many colored, many mottoed flags,
Beat daylight into irredescent stars
That flashed and danced and laughed along the lines.
Most notably, between the marching lines,
A long procession, not so gaily decked,

Marched under arches that o'erspanned the street.
The "social evil" women of the town
With honest candor bore their banners up,
Devised with many mottoes of their class:
"We've waited for a blessing—it has come."
"We will not turn away with empty hands."
"This is the season of our hopefulness."
"Sisters, help us." "We are women still, in heart."
"God, help us!" "Christ as much for us—for all."
"Two thousand voters! Shall they be a class?"
"Salvation is our price, and nothing less"
So read their mottoes, and their banners so.
With honest openness of face and speech
They sang their songs, and bore their ensigns up.
No ashes on their heads nor sable clothes
To mock their truth; no meekness of the saint
That makes the sinner hideous to the sight.
Their mottoes were so many prayers for help;
Their songs, petitions that invade the skies
With unrelenting earnestness of hope;
Yet even these, with all their hopefulness—
These women, yet redeemable through love—
Were, to the Bombazines, but staring signs
Set up to warn the Bombazines of harm.
Indeed, one truth was patent to all eyes.
The new "extremists" with their larger love,
Or show of love, made narrow all their skirts
T'avoid their friction with tainted robes
Of this unsocial "social evil" class.

Shine out, O stars! Flash on us all your light,
For we who dwell in darkness need the day;
We dare not prophecy, and so bow down
Before the majesty of woman's will.
'Tis beautiful to wait on woman's love—
To kneel before it and to kiss its hand;
But O, the sadness of the dreary thought,
That in its palm the lines of charity
Are lost to us. Behold! along the street
An hundred banners Egotism waves,
And Liebolds trumpet with a hundred tongues,
The god-like attributes of Bombazines—
The matchless glory of the Franknesses!
Mid wild acclaim and zealous shouts of pain,
Mid clamorous music and the voice of song,
Mid emulative banners that, with joy,
Leap up and dip their tassels in the sun,
O'erwhelmed with waves of beauty, song, and light,
Philosophy, excitedly, throws down
His stupid lens, and snatching up a lute
He plays a complement while women sing:

SONG.

Shall man rebel against the light,
And sin against himself?
Leave steadfast trust for doubtful might,
And woman's love for pelf?

Where Beauty lifts her shining face,
The darkness flees away ;
Her presence, like a special grace,
Makes glad the coming day.

The kiss of God is woman's crown—
A consecrating fire !
Through her alone He reaches down,
And man is lifted higher.

A messenger of peace she comes ;
Her banners are unfurled ;
She woos and wins, and rules and reigns,
And glorifies the world !

Two thousand women listen to the song,
But dare not echo it. Two thousand stand
In mute despair, or mute astonishment ;
And tremble in their white redemption robes.
All this for man, who does not need the help—
Who scorns the helpers and defies their love ;
Whose heavy weight of lusts would crush the gods
Who dare reach down to lift so much of dirt.
All this for man ; but not a word of love
For us, two thousand sisters—us who pray,
Weep, cry for mercy, shriek for help in vain !
In vain in this brave sisterhood of love—
In vain on all the man-despoiling earth—
In vain in life, in death, the grave,

In heaven, or hell, or God's great universe !
Nay, that's a lie ! the black lie of despair,
That tempts us sometimes to forget ourselves,
Turn atheists, and curse the name of God !
Philosophy and fantasy clasp hands
In solemn covenant to cheat the world ;
You stuff the one, like any other owl,
And fool the other with a scented glove.
So says Miss Bombazine ; and furthermore
She will not let the tassels of her glove
Touch where the fingers of your Magdalen
Have left pollution on the ballot box.
There *is* a difference, she stoutly claims,
Between embracing Maggie with your heart
And touching her with fingers that are clean.
God may descend to touch her with his love,
But woman dare not ; woman must keep pure.
Christ may forgive her ; woman never can.
How easily you learn to trail your robes
Between the two moralities, my dear !
Ah, Bombazine, you're always too much right.
A little wrong on mercy's side with God
Is worth a world of righteousness without.
The Lucifers who sneer, though safe in heaven,
Give through that sneer, a startling glimpse of hell !

The long procession passed ; the music ceased,
And there was silence pleasant to the sense.
The sudden stillness woke the Governor,

As from a painful and much tangled dream;
But always, through the mazes of that dream,
A fair young face, immovably serene,
Held all her eyes. How like a face she knew;
Yet how unlike, in a superior way.
Some lines were there on which to hang a hope;
Some shade of passion touched a single fact;
But still too faint to lead the certain way
To recognition. When the clamor ceased,
The spell was broken; still she held the face,
And, sighing, sought relief in making words
To match the thread of speech that had been dropt:

“And you would call her by the sacred name
Of mother? All your heart was in the word;
Your emphasis was like an orphan's cry
For mother's love. Now, all good mother's weep
To hear such piteous pleadings, and reach out
To catch the pleaders in their loving arms.”

The poet was not sweet; his eyes had seen,
And ears had heard too much he did not like:

“Is it so strange a thing beneath the sun,
That honest women should reach out their hands
To gather waifs from gutters? Is it so;
And yet so common and so small a thing
For mothers to throw down their sucking babes
On thoroughfares to die, or cuddle them

In baskets hung at decent people's doors?
I've seen some honest mothers weep hot tears
O'er orphans in the foundling hospital;
The while the little ones unconscious smiled—
Poor waifs shut out from all sweet-loving life
Because they were those mothers' stolen goods,
Thrown out for fear the world would find the thief.
Poor mothers! How they suffered; poorer thieves,
With neither honest rottenness nor health."

The lady checked him suddenly, and said:

"The cynic is a sophist of rare wit;
His logic is a lancet, keen enough,
But used, too often, with unskillful hand.
You cynics are but victims of your moods;
Your moods are chronic, hence you are diseased.
'Tis therefore we are tolerant to you,
And treat you as a patient, not a pest.
A mother lost so early in your life
Has given you a melancholy mood;
But you are brave enough to break this spell,
And hope that somewhere in this busy world
You yet may find your mother and her love."

Impatiently the poet moved his hand:

"Spare all your sympathy. I have been nursed
By mothers who were paid for motherhood.

The only rapture such as they can feel
Is in the money paid them for their milk.
The rest is, 'curse you,' with a savage fling
That leaves the wretch face downward on the floor.
An 'institution' has effective ways
To teach a child the value of restraint;
It has no corners where the wretch can cry;
It is a fierce, relentless, sleepless eye
That glares unceasingly through all his dreams,
And meets him in the morning when he wakes.
You cannot hide the wicked gasp of pain
That follows after blows; you learn restraint.
This 'institution,' in its monstrous way,
Impresses all its victims to believe
All motherhoods and fatherhoods are shams;
All charity an ornamental wart;
And what the world calls truth, a bitter lie."

"You have been foully robbed—inhumanly;
I see it, and my heart bleeds for your wrongs.
I long to hear the hist'ry of your life."

"I fear your heart would learn to pity me;
And Pity is own brother to Contempt.
The foundling saints denied me any birth—
A father or a mother—they were right.
I'm nothing but a wind-apportioned waif,
Just dropt into a basket at their gate—
Not even flung there by a mother's hand.

They have some masonry by which they know
How mothers fling away their stolen goods."

She caught him sharply with a sudden quest:

"How old are you? You seem so very young,
And yet so very old—beyond your years!"

"One lucky day the keeper thrust me out;
A voice, that sounded like a creaking gate
Close to my ear, said, 'You are seventeen.'
This unexpected favor made me weep;
But better mem'ries dried those tears so quick
They did not wet my eyelids. So I went.
Five years ago, this was—five years, to-day."

Again she caught him up with sudden speech:

"Five years ago, to-day? You're sure of that?
You're two and twenty, on this tenth of June;
Just two and twenty, on this tenth of June!
And—well!—I'm listening—on this tenth of June!"

She touched the blind to get a breath of air,
Or hide the palor of her cheeks, or tears.
The poet answered with a touch of spleen:

"Some twenty years ago, this tenth of June,
My mother (was it?) hung me at the gate

Of Foundling Hospital, in Baltimore.
Why not have flung me in the nearest ditch?
Her love, her hate, her conscience—which was it?
Her conscience! this she draggled through the street
Till no one knew it from the common dirt.
Her love! she wolves could teach her what love is.
Her fears! she's not a harlot, with her fears,
For harlots are too honest to have fears.
My mother do this wrong? No, lady, no!
No! by the breath of life I swear to you
My mother never, never left me so.
I've seen her in my dreams—I know her face;
And such a face ne'er looked upon a deed
So base as that, and kept its purity.
No, she was good, my mother was, I know,
Whoever else was false, or foul, or base;
I'll still maintain my mother was all good."

He sighed, and dropt the burden of his speech,
Still looking outward, where the mountains meet.
A wailing voice came trembling to his ear:

"Oh, doubt her not, or she will fly from you!
To doubt in this is utterly to die
To all the good that's worth the living for.
Oh! do not doubt her, though the earth should cry
With all his tongues, 'tis her, we know 'tis her!
'Tis slander—most inhuman, most unjust."

He turned, to meet a face that frightened him ;
So whitely anxious, so intensely still.
It seemed to wait an answer to a thought,
Or seek a revelation in his eyes.
It calmed his fever, and he meekly said :

“ We all have visions—some in early life,
Before the doubting days, despite the world
Which sets its heavy, unrelenting foot
Upon our better natures. Early dreams
Have premonitions that are worth respect ;
'Tis well to trust them ; better so than doubt,
Although they fail to fill their prophecies.
I have my vision ; it has followed me
From those dark corners of the hospital,
That know so much of infant suffering,
Unceasingly—is with me still—is here !
My God ! your face alarms me—it is her's !
So like, so like—so marvelously like !”

“ Your father ?” gasped the lady, white as death.

“ I know him not. There came a heartless man—
His shoulders broad, his dark hair neatly dressed
To fall in ringlets round his bullish neck ;
Teeth white and eminently devilish ;
Lithe as a leopard, spotted as his skin
With earthly lusts His hands were far too white—
A woman's hands—too white for honest work.

He met me at the gate—this tenth of June.
With sneering lip and insolence of speech,
He stop'd me there: 'Your name is Myron Blank;
Here's money—here's a locket, too—its gold;
Don't throw it in the ditch, nor "shove it up
Some Jewish spout"; it has a ribbon to't;
Your mother'll know it; damn her, be it so.'
And then he went his way; I cared not where.
I threw the money in the nearest ditch;
But this I've kept most sacredly secure."

Here he displayed the locket—not so large
As half an English crown—well battered, too;
And, by the faded ribbon, held it up
Between the lady and the window pane.
She gazed upon the locket, gaspingly,
As if the metal had a magnet's force
To pull her eyes out. Eagerly she gazed,
Her arms stretched forward, and her lips apart.
And so she sat, unconscious that her lips
Were breathing out the secrets of her heart,
In words so dimly audible, so low,
You'd think an angel whispered on the air:

"Be still as death; look till your eyes grow clear,
And listen for the heart beats that announce
The glad certainty! O, God of love!
Oh! master of all secrets visit me,
Or let me die!"

A sudden gleam of light,
As from a rifted cloud in memory,
Flashed through the poet's consciousness. He cried :

" My mother! mother! God has come to us!"

The spell was broken. With a sudden spring
She caught him round the neck, and pulled his head
Close down upon her bosom, murmuring low :

" My son! my son! my son!" unceasingly.
" That precious word once more! Speak, speak, my son;
And call me mother. All is growing dark!
Quick! quick! I hear you! God!" She ceased.

" Oh, mother! mother! do not leave me thus!
Have I just found you but to find you dead?
Down! busy curses come not to the light!
Here's too much whiteness for discolored thoughts.
What! shall I, in the presence of this death,
Still question God? Shall hateful doubt arise,
And bring its ugly counsel even here?
Stand fast, sweet Hope; I will not lose you now;
Here, on my knees, I swear to honor thee—
To follow all thy teachings, precious Hope.
Clasp hands with me; you say it is not death,
And I believe; you say it is not death!
Salvation comes to me through you, sweet Hope!

It is not death! thank God, it is not death!
'Tis but the halting of the heart to learn
Whence comes this frightful suddenness of joy!
The coward life with trembling steps returns.
I'll kiss her into consciousness, or die
Upon her lips."

CHAPTER IV.

Is this a mercy, miracle, or grace?
A skeptic by the touch of love redeemed,
Snatched from the open jaws of moral death!
The skeptic, who but yesterday was blind,
Sees God, and Love, and Faith, with clearer eyes
Than half the older saints who have a creed.
The tender rapture of a mother's love
Has wrought this wonder, which is wonderful.
Behold him, leaning on his mother's chair;
How radiant he is!— how worshipful!

“ This is God's morning, mother—call it so ;
The morning of new life to me at least.
I heard of God far off and doubtfully,
And thought I knew Him through His breath of fire
That flashed from out the sun ; His voice of wrath,
That drowned the ocean with its fearful roar ;
But as a God of love, I knew Him not
Until my mother showed me where He lives,
And led me to His house. O, mother dear!
But yesterday I might have called to you ;
No voice in all the world would answer me,

No mother's hand embrace mine in its clasp;
But now, in answer to the earnest cry,
You catch me up with all your strength of smiles,
And in the arms of your retrieving love
I live again. Oh, blessed mother, thanks.
How wonderful it seems to me that I
Should have a mother, and be called a son!
Men spoke of me inquisitively, thus:
'This Myron—(what's his name?)—his family name
Was lost somewhere last night, between two streets;
A suitable reward—and so forth.' Thus
Men daub our reputation with their mud.
I thank you, mother—thank you for this life;
'Tis yours—you gave it twice; now build it up
And teach me how I may become your pride
Above all other sons of woman born."

Proud mother! how she idolized her son;
Caressed his hand, gazed in his deep blue eyes,
And murmured mother-raptures in his ears!
She dreamed last night, that from the frightful brink
Of some hot crater's throat she snatched her babe;
With joy delirious she pressed it close,
And shouted, "saved!" She waked, and found it true.
She answered, slowly, gazing on his face:

"Your earnest wish is all the school you need;
Your heart will be your teacher. I'm content;
All doubts are buried in this sea of bliss."

He echoed her, his breath upon her hair.
She caught his arm, and, in a whisper, said :

"I give you all my love—I can no more ;
But do not rashly echo me, my son,
In this abandon. Women have their eyes
So early consecrated to the use
And offices of love, that they are quick
At reading blushes and translating sighs.
Our Frankness is an angel—do not start—
My love is large enough to grasp you both."

His lip, as usual, for an instant curled,
Half formed a sneer, but failed in the attempt.
This spasm was the last—Love held her own.
He touched his mother's forehead with his lips,
Caressed her shining hair, and whispered low :

"You startled me ; I did not deem that Love
Her name had written on the heart I had,
To shine out brighter on the heart I have.
Oh ! strange perversity of human will !
But two short days I've known the lady Joe,
And mostly through a wrangle of hard words,
With impudent audacity of speech.
I've wooed her coarsely, snarling at her faith,
And won her just derision, if no worse.
I loved her as a snarling skeptic loves,
Whose hateful temper hates the thing it loves."

A dainty footstep on the marble stair,
A sweeping sound of silk along the floor,
Came floating in together on the breeze.
And hastily announced a visitor.
The lady rose, and, arm in arm, they stood,
The mother and the son, to greet their guest.
Miss Josie Frankness, in her beauty, came
O'ercrowned with smiles, and redolent with sweets
Of late June blossoms and the sweet-brier leaves.
The mother waved her hand for audience:

"Stand there, my darling—not another step
Until you know how great a joy is mine.
Your party triumph is a cause of bliss
To all your friends—a compliment to you.
You have my blessing, dearest, sweetest friend—
But, *Io Triumphe!* I have found a son!
Behold him here; my long lost, newly found,
Best treasure of my life! Now give me joy!"

And Myron answered, standing proudly up:

"And I have found a mother; give me joy!
This blessing lifts me into life again;
In touching it, I reach so near to God
I hear the music of His trailing robes."

Surprised and pleased, the smiling Josie turned
To Myron first, then to her dear old friend,
And, clasping hands, with ecstasy exclaimed:

"You, Myron! You, my Esther, dearest love—
Best woman of the world—I give you joy!
In awe of your great happiness I stand;
In jealous pleasure watch you, and rejoice,
But weep to think I lose one-half your love."

Then, for a reason that no man can tell,
She threw her arms around the mother's neck,
And wept upon her shoulder—trembled, blushed,
And hid her face beneath her drooping hair.
Occultly wonderful are woman's tears;
Expressing nothing, and yet everything;
Her love, her hate, her rapture, her despair,
Her little worry, and her less caprice,
Her doubts, her certainties, her wish or will,
Unknown emotion, and no cause at all.
A woman only reads a woman's tears,
And in the mystic manner of a kiss
Announces verdict. Josie's tears were read,
The verdict noted at a sudden glance,
And, by a kiss, masonic, emphasized
Upon her eyelids. All the mother's heart
Embraced the weeping lady in that kiss.
The tear-wet lashes of those matchless eyes
Contained much lightning of a certain kind;
It pierced the poet's heart—(a single flash)—
And left him dumb with rapturous surprise.

"Be seated, dear, and give us all the news.
No angry feelings prevalent, I hope—
No words improper, no unpleasant scenes?"

"No; all went smoothly as a marriage feast.
Miss Bombazine was sisterly and kind,
Though earnest in her efforts to succeed;
Perhaps a little zealous overmuch
In class distinctions—cannot quite forget
The teachings of our prim New England School.
Some men were ultra—somewhat loud, indeed;
But, in the presence of the ladies, still
Remembered their politeness. There was one—
A stranger to us all—who claimed to lead
The 'social evil' element, so-called;
I did not like the manner of the man;
His words were coarse, his actions indiscreet,
His motives mercenary and his means
Unscrupulous. I caught his wicked eye—
It frightened me; I noticed his white teeth,
And stood aghast, as one who meets a wolf.
The very curls that crawled about his neck
Like serpents seemed. I doubt and dread the man."

The gentle Governor arrested her
With touch upon the arm; a moment held
The lady's face with quick and searching eyes,
Then dropt it so:

"You did not hear his name?"

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"But once; and then so doubtfully distinct
I did not care to make a note of it.
Professor Lordly patronized the man,
And held him, as a leash-hound, well in hand.
His royal Fatness, like a jostled heap
Of cow-foot jelly, quivered in his wrath
When Bombazine indignantly refused
An introduction to his snaky friend.
That pleased me much; and so I made a point
To shake him more by moving on his works;
Took Bombazine upon my arm and walked
Beyond the odor of his greasiness.
But Bombazine, in passing, was revenged:
By accident she pressed her gaiter-heels
Too heavily upon his lumpy toes.
'Twas wicked, if intentional. He roared!
The great he-calf. But she, with awful bow,
Excused herself; whereat the people laughed,
And some one cried: 'Old Hippopotamus!'"

Here Myron took the subject, and went on:

"A filthy hypocrite; whose dirty hands
But soil the altar-cup he dares to touch.
He draws the pious unction of his throat
Through viscid lips of massive beastliness.
Against such canting ministers as these,
Who sit, with open bibles in their hands,
Defying honor, charity, and truth,

With maxims ravished from the holy writ,
The Church must close her doors and seal her crypts,
Or lose the prestige of her honored name,
Her sacred robes, and relics of her saints."

His earnestness moved Josie to a smile.
A change, so sudden, from his surly mood,
Amused the lady. Just to try his nerve
She touched the Church with some asperity:

"The Church is not our friend—has never been;
And will be last to range itself as such.
Her medieval robes have only slipt—
Not fallen off. Such monster men as these
Are not exponents of the Mother Church,
And yet are possible within her creeds.
Your habit-preachers approbate St. Paul;
They take his wooden image to their arms
And kiss it ardently before our face,
That thereby we may learn to love St. Paul,
And walk behind our husbands all our lives.
One man to seven women—women veiled
In honor of the man. Long live St. Paul!
No! I demur. If husband I must have,
I claim the right of walking by his side--
His equal, everywhere, before the law."

The sweet-faced Governor just dropt her fan
On Josie's arm, with scarce a feather's weight:

"The Christian Church—the Universal Church,
Where God and Christ are worshipped as one name—
This Church has been the woman's ablest friend ;
With all its seeming weaknesses, the Church
Has been our champion. Upon her arm
We leaned for help, and found it ever prompt
To lift us up and bear us on our way.
For eighteen centuries have noble men
Been ever at our sides, with willing hands
To help us upward. Beauty won their love,
And love made beauty still more beautiful,
Until it grew into a special strength
And stood alone. For this we thank the Church
In part; in part, the faith and love of man.
Well, shall we now throw off the helping hands,
Despise the Church, and call our brothers thieves?
No, no, my children; bless the Mother Church;
Caress the master-hands that helped us up;
But take no gift from either having rust
Of worn-out customs on it. Love, and learn;
Be grateful, but discreet. The dawn is here,
And we can see much clearer than we did
Amid the twilight of our servitude."

The son, delighted, kissed the mother's hand ;
But Josie, most provokingly, replied :

"O, yes; the Church is wonderfully loud
In egotistic sounding of its brass.

I've seen her white-faced ministers astare—
Their soft palms place together with a sigh,
And patronize their sister ministers
With supercilious suavity of scorn.
Yes; men have helped us—thank them with a will—
Great-hearted men, who never learned the trick
Of microscoping woman's minor faults
To mountain difficulties. These are few;
But those, whose prejudices bar the way
To woman's rights, are plentiful as gnats.
They swarm the churches, colleges, and schools;
They pack the court, and fill all offices.
I will not quarrel with these little men—
They are not worth an honest woman's scorn,
Much less her pity. I have work to do,
And shall not shrink from doing it because
Fools giggle at the flutter of a flounce.
Conservatives, they call themselves—mere snails—
Too safe within their house for any use.
Conservatism! 'tis a name polite
For flat stupidity; whose owlsh eyes
Stare vacantly, and wonder why the sun
Gives less of light than Ursa's smaller stars.
It struggles hard to hide its own decay,
Yet lacks the strength to keep the worms away;
Most aptly busy, piously employed,
Collating and preserving dead men's bones.
What care such mummies for the honest zeal
That makes a purer nature leap with joy—

For that divine tenacity of faith
That wreaths a dying martyr's lips with smiles?
The skeptic is still worse; those have some life,
But he is dead and laid away to rust."

"Miss Josie wrongs me. Quite an age has passed
Since I was born again—two days, at least.
The skeptic that you knew two days ago
Died just one day ago. I, who stand here,
Am stranger to the Myron Blank that was.
I have a name, a mother, and a love
To live for; and I want to live for them.
I've found a mother—that is being born;
And, since I've found her, what have I to do
With skepticism—anything, but love?
No, no, dear lady; nothing more of that;
I'm wax, unmoulded, waiting for a hand
To fashion me."

He kissed his mother's hand.
The smiling Josie earnestly replied:

"No safer can you find in all the land;
Cling to it fondly, and your faith will grow.
You found a blessing when you lost yourself—
Thank God for both the losing and the gain.
Well, since you're wax, Lyoma will be glad
To have the task of moulding you aright.
Suppose we say a flower? for this, you know,

Is Flora-land—a 'garden of fair girls,'
The lilies and the roses of the earth.
What say you to a hollyhock? too proud?"

Then Myron blushed—a thing quite new to him:

"Say myrtle for yourself; and wear it so.
The hollyhock is cold—it has no heart;
It is your emblem since ambition's fire
Has touched your lips; the myrtle is more safe.
I choose the myrtle—you, the hollyhock."

But Josie shook her saucy curls and laughed:

"The myrtle to the hollyhock! that's good!
You're gaining strength—you'll walk by five o'clock.
Narcissus yesterday—a selfish weed
That stooped above its own impressive face
In some secluded brook! Well, what a change!
But, since you hang your modest myrtle wreath
Upon the hollyhock, we'll wear it so;
I'll take your offering, and wear it so.
I've read of gallant knights, in armor cased,
Whose hearts were reached through all their iron guard
By one soft passion-flower, and thereby fell;
Ambitious women are as soft as those.
But you must hear my speech before you choose;
Perhaps you'll change; the 'crown imperial' give,
Or turn away from flowers altogether."

Then Myron answered, with a pleasant smile:

"Your jest is half a jest—truth fathers it.
The way of congressmen is hard, indeed;
You'll find your duty not a pleasant task,
Though self-imposed, and worked for charity.
Men have their generous impulses, and aims
Unselfish, patriotic, and all that;
But, heavens! how soon they die! so young, so young!
At thirty, such men lose all faith in man;
At thirty-five, hope withers and drops off;
At forty, cold conservatism chills
The last warm drop of blood; at forty-five
To fifty, an automaton, set up
For healthy knaves to manage as they will;
At sixty, dead, and measured for his cloak
(A rosewood mantle, buttoned with a screw);
Then laid in state and mourned becomingly,
Much epitaphed, much honored, much forgot.
An aster for your weeds—for e'en a nun
Can not conceal her beauty with a hood."

"Ah! beauty is a peony that scorns
The orange blossoms, star it as you may."

"Well, well; you'll wear the myrtle? thanks for that;
And for all else, I'll counsel with my mother."

Joe laughed, and kissed the mother for the son ;
And, laughing, fled. Bright tears were in her eyes ;
(There's no accounting for a woman's tears ;)
They frightened her—they half discouraged her—
They told her that infatuated love
Would trip ambition by the heel some day.
The mother smiled a most mysterious smile,
And followed Josie with her pleasant eyes ;
Then, turning to her son, and rising, said :

" 'Tis four o'clock, my son ; we promised her,
And will not be the latest to attend.
'Tis well to see her in her champion robes—
To learn how well they fit a woman's waist—
To note how royally she holds her train
In crossing mirey places on her road.
She loves you ! honor that—be proud of that ;
But also does she love the loud applause
Position gives her—blame her not for that.
Deal patiently, and love will get its own."

" I love her, mother ; and I'll tell her so
Before the world. I honor her great heart ;
And her ambition fits her like a crown,
Whereon I gaze with most supreme content.
I'll wait and work for her ; I'll help her up,
If any strength is given me to help.
What more can love demand of love, but love ?
God, first ; and next to Him, my mother dear ;
And Josie Frankness may have all beside."

CHAPTER V.

The hall is packed; two thousand people wait
The speaker's coming. All the seats are filled,
And hundreds press and clamor at the door.
Meanwhile, at leisure, we will look about
And note the wondrous fittings of the room.
'Tis all one spacious auditorium,
With quaint devices frescoed by the hands
Of women artists; cabalistic lines
Divide and classify the room in "sets."
The floral-maids, with early morning flowers—
The gala-girls, with many-colored flags—
The fair Lebanos, with their cedar boughs—
These coast the walls, and hang their offerings
In fancy groups, festoons, and rare bouquets,
And waving flags that fan the sweetened air.
The mystic lines, that subdivide the room
As party lines, embody all the law
And gospel of the voting women's class.

First, to the right, the Tilton lines appear;
Their narrow limits cramp the narrow seats.
Adjacent, are the dual Beecher lines—

The Beecher Blues, who claim the precedence—
The Beecher Whites, by far the healthier.
These pietists affect a jaunty scarf
Of thinnest gauze, that slips with artless art
From Venus-shoulders, rosy as the morn.
The Tiltons and the Beechers look amazed
To meet each other, blush, and hang their heads;
Discreetly chaste in their phylacteries,
And meekly careful of collusive skirts,
They sit apart, forgetting, in their grief,
The classic pictures hanging at their belts—
“Cupid and Psyche”—Greek as Greek can be—
The “Piety and Passion” of our time—
In covenantal fitness, lip to lip.
The Abby Fosters, pressed against the wall,
Are next to those. They dress in scarlet silk,
With scarlet ribbons floating round their heads;
Defiantly they crush the household gods
Between their cruel fingers as they sit.
Each wears a martyr’s cabalistic crown,
Ingenious in its sweet simplicity,
Contrived of tax receipts and women’s votes,
And savage Massachusetts laws entwined.
The Lucy Stones, on neighboring benches sit,
And interchange civilities and bows;
The hari-kari weapons at their belts
Are more for ornamental show than use.
The Anthonys have “revolution votes”
Engraved on brass, with volant eagle ’bossed,

And worn as military shoulder-straps.
Each wore a shining dagger at her side,
Of colored glass—mere ornaments, of course ;
Large photographs, that give the comic phase
Of district judges chained upon a bench,
And little women with their little feet
Upon judicial necks. The judges smile
Serenely sweet, and rather seem to like
The suffocating process. Wretched brutes !
How dare they smile when number nothing shoes
Are bravely, fiercely, pressing out their lives !
George Francis Trains, with trains unlimited,
Swept all the aisles, in countless colors wrought,
And painted incoherently ; with forms
As formless as an ever-changing mist—
Heads minus bodies—bodies minus heads—
Arm locked in arms (just arms and nothing more)—
Lips wanting faces—faces wanting lips—
And words diffusive, covered all their robes.
Woodhulls and Clafflins, and the Laura Fairs,
And Richardsons, and Bloods, and Spencer-Britts,
Were crowded out ; their seats are occupied
By Magdalens—by far a safer class ;
A class too large for secrecy or sham—
Too small for those who have no sins to hide.
None are so weak as those whose weaknesses
Are hidden from themselves ; and none so loud
As those upon whose lips propriety
Has laid its finger. Motionless and mute,

With folded hands and patiently, they wait
For her whose words have caught them suddenly—
Whose hand has lifted them above themselves.
The Magdalens— But silence! here she comes!
The lovely Joe—the lady eloquent—
And by her side the stately Governor.
The venerable lady wins a smile
From all the people—all, a smile from her.
One face she saw that blanched her face with fright—
The grinning lecher—smiling like a fiend;
She knew him well; and many, many years
Of grief the knowledge gave her heart and soul.
Behind her walked the poet, nervously;
He felt the ground give way beneath his faith—
Stood still, and lost himself. Two thousand eyes
Were focused on his face; he felt their heat,
And blushed. In silent wonder thus he stood,
Till some one pulled him gently by the sleeve—
A lady brushed her snowy skirts aside
To give him room; he bowed, and took a seat,
Unwittingly, among the Beecher Whites.
Miss Josie Frankness, bowing as she walked,
Pressed through the crowded aisles, and up the steps
That reached the rostrum—bowing, took her seat.
The sweet-faced Governor was at her right,
And at her left, Miss Bombazine, M. D.
All parties rose to greet them with applause—
The music crashed a bar to swell the noise.
O'er all the room, where late the stream of words

Ran rippling with a bird-like symphony,
A sudden silence fell—so still it was,
The man of dogs crushed down his ugly whelps
Because their breathing rose too audibly.
Professor Lordly held his breath, and stared,
As men will do whose busy consciences
Are stillest in a noise; in silence, loud.
The hateful lecher halted in his grin,
And cowered low to hide himself away—
In proof of Holy Writ. “The wicked flee
Where none pursue.” Miss Bombazine arose,
Looked up and down the many-colored aisles,
Then waved her hand for audience, and said:

“Of all the days that help the year along,
This is the one that we may justly call
Lyoma’s recollection day. Such days
Are epochs in our present history;
We cannot spare them from our calendar.
A day so largely eloquent as this
In gentle courtesies and kindly words,
That all its minutes are so many songs,
Is worth preserving in our little State.
Now all discordant elements are hushed,
And we are met in harmony to greet
Our Honorable Representative,
Miss Josie Frankness!” (Clapping of soft hands
And little shrieks of approbation rose).
“’Tis well; you all applaud without reserve,

And prove thereby the kindness of your hearts,
No less than proper judgment of the right."

She spoke her little piece, and took her seat.
The honorable member took the stand,
In every air, in every grace, a queen.
"How lovely!" in a gentle whisper, rose
More like a sigh of pleasure than a voice.
The brutal man of dogs could not suppress
His approbation. "Dang, it's 'ansum wench,"
Slipt through his dull distemper like a curse.

"I will not weary you with too much talk;
We've had enough of that, and ask for rest.
We, who are buried in this Western wild,
Scarce get an echo from the Eastern shore
Of this great continent. Our sisters there
Are struggling bravely, if not all in vain.
They now are waiting for our answering words;
Their hearts are stilled, as, with a sudden awe,
They press their ears close down upon the track
And strive to catch the babble of the rails—
The *avant courier* of that Western train
That brings the news. Brave sisters of the East!
We send you greeting with triumphant cheers!
Shout with us, if you will; weep, if you will;
Pray, if it suits you better; pray, but work,
For work is all the prayer that God will hear!
Why is it that our sisters of the East

Have such slight compensation for their work?
Because there's too much 'man' in all their schemes--
A want of trust in women—scare of cant,
An aptitude for kisses on the lips
That conquers all their courage, slaves their will,
And makes them weaker than the weakest men.
There's too much man for honorable work;
To love in this way, and to work in that,
Is not the act of faith that truth demands.
Work first, and win; and, after triumph, love:
Each in its order, single in its tense.
This is our motto. Sisters, we have won,
And if we wish for love, why, let it come!
True labor is the first command of God;
And he or she who scorns the privilege
Must ever rank with cowards in the land.
The whitest hand may have its daily work,
And do it faithfully, and still keep white.
Your works of charity must needs be clean.
• Here is your sin, my sisters of weak nerves:
Your babes are starving for their mothers' work;
Their flesh is white and pure enough for love,
And mothers are kept pure in nursing them;
But, blacker than the blackest sin of sins,
Is she who dries her breast against her babe —
Is she who keeps her breast for jewelers
To advertise their costly wares upon —
Is she who calls the heartless, mocking world
To witness to her wilful barrenness!

Those stately bosoms, kept for vulgar show,
Are Lamiaë that death can never cleanse!
There's too much 'man' in all this treachery.
Why! what are men that you should count their sneers?
They educate you in the art of dress,
Then carp at you for dressing as an art;
They teach you that dependence is a grace,
Then ridicule you for your helplessness;
They want you white of skin and soft of voice,
Then turn with loathing from the sickly blood
That makes their wives such weaklings in their arms;
They want you feminine — essentially
And altogether feminine — in heart,
In thought, in action, and in very deed;
And then your femininity is held
A weakness only, serving their excuse
For any wickedness of pride or lust.
But all true femininity is force.
We have it in excess, and with our touch,
Can, if we will it, make the world stand up
To give us honor, place, and courtesy.
We, of the West, have conquered by this force;
But yours is sickly sentiment, so weak
It tames the temper of your womanhood.
You need much roughing, in a healthy way,
To wilt the neatness of New England starch.
You feed yourselves on weak inanities,
And drape expressive thoughts in cerements

So neatly ironed that they pain the sight
With too much proper manner of the dead."

Full one hour more she kept her audience well,
Now sobbing with heart-broken utterance,
Now laughing with her at her timely jests.
To follow her throughout her lengthy speech
Would weary, without profit or delight.
At last she turns, and with her finger points
Where Magdalens are sitting. All her heart
Came to her lips, and moved upon the ear,
Like wailing music from a mourning choir:

"My sisters, hear! a heavy work is hers
Who carries outcast woman in her heart
Along the highway of this brutal world,
Oh, shameful world! oh, most unrighteous world!
Each woman here is some one's sister -Whose?
Not yours, nor yours, nor mine? God keep us safe.
Stand still, and call no names; we're mortals all.
I did not go to you, nor send to you;
I knew you not, except as women, here
With claims of womanhood upon us all.
I thank you for your help, as much for you
As for myself. Perhaps you did not think
You gave me room by this to work for you
As well as for the public good; perhaps
You thought far more than I dare think of it?
Now, help me, God! and I will work for these

With special labor and incessant zeal.
Their hearts are women's still, though scorched by fire
As merciless as hell's, which hears no prayer.
Have I not heard your wild, despairing cries,
Which made pale terror shriek and flee away;
Have I not seen your frightful forms of dust,
That made death shudder at his ghastly work?
Yes; all the world has seen your blank despair,
And heard the wailings of your utter woes.
Brave-hearted men there are, who know your needs—
Because they love all women, grieve for you;
Their hearts and hands are open for your good;
But, being men, they dare not, for your sakes,
Assume the brotherhood you ask of them.
'Tis their misfortune—not a fault in them;
Their sex impugns their motives and their acts.
But you have placed me here to see to this;
To stand between you, with a hand each way;
To clasp yours on the left, theirs on the right,
And thereby bring the helper and his help
To you who wait, and pray, and weep for it.
Through me, God willing, you shall reach their aid.
Come, now, to me—rise from your seats and come;
Surround this stand—so; shake the past aside;
Join hands with me—I hold your woman hearts,
Potential prophecies of coming good!
Now pray! pray for yourselves! each for herself—
Call—God will hear you; He is here to-day.
Emanuel, help them! God, in mercy, help!"

Then rose a shout—such as time-serving men
Ne'er gave to party for the party's sake.
The heart-screams of a class whose unsealed eyes
Discern the faintest gleaming of a hope
Beyond the rifted cloud. 'Twas not applause—
But prayer, heart-deep in promises, to God—
Wild, earnest cries for aid, and brave resolves,
And crazy laughter of insane beliefs
In possibilities above the stars!
A sea of women, with their flood of wrongs,
Flowed round the speaker; women kneeling down,
And women clasping women in their arms;
Poor wretches! upward gazing, half entranced,
Saw heaven nearing—saw such purity
As made them mute with its great loveliness,
Or threw them, senseless, in each other's arms.
And there were women prostrate at her feet,
Low down in dust, who kissed her trailing robes.
The audience rose, and, surging toward the stand,
Rushed on itself, as waves lap over waves.
Each class forgot its specialties, and mixed
In marvellous confusion. Beecher Whites
And Magdalens locked arms; the Tiltons wept
Upon the shoulders of the Francis Trains;
The valiant Anthonys embraced the Blues,
And shattered all their daggers in the crash.
The Irish women called down all the saints,
And crossed themselves, and howled atrociously.
Sublime, above it all, our Josie stood—

A glorified Madonna, radiant
With that great faith which women used to climb
The heavens with--a weakness of great strength.
Within the circle of that (sin, was it?)
Within that circle, Purity sat down
The guest of God--the favored of His love.
Professor Lordly's mountain heap of flesh
Swayed like a vessel foundered on the rocks;
The flabby dewlap of his beastly chin
Crawled upward, wrinkled like an adder skin--
Turned palely purple, livid, and then gray.
Pat Murphy shouted:

“Bridget, be a mon;
I'll howld yer bonnet, gurrel. 'Rah for Joe!”

What more he might have said is now unknown.
A sharp report, just at his ear--a flash
That stung him like a dagger-point--a cry
Of half a thousand women in one scream!
And then, appalled, he saw Miss Josie reel--
Saw blood upon her bosom and her neck!
Then saw her caught upon the upraised arms
Of many women, screaming in despair,
All wild with anguish and the sudden fright.
Just at his feet he saw another sight;
The lecher comrade of his last night's spree
Lay writhing in the unrelenting grasp
Of Myron Audley--choking--gasping--dead!

Then Murphy, frantic with this new surprise,
Exclaimed:

“ He’s dead, yer honor; let him lie,
An hurry ’till yer misthress—hurry, mon !”

And Myron did not wait for further words ;
He rushed among the women — forced his way —
And caught the bleeding Josie in his arms ;
But she recovered quickly. ’Twas a scratch,
A touch that cut her temple, nothing more.

“ Go to your mother, Myron — she has swooned —
And leave me to these women. All is well.”

Pat Murphy’s wrath was terrible. He swore,
A thing he never did when at his wits ;
But finding nothing to appease his wrath
Save women’s bonnets and some empty hats,
He spent his anger on the yelping dogs.

“ Take that, ye spalpeen, yees ; and that, ye hound.”

At each fell blow a dog became a corpse.

“ Git out o’ that, ye dirty dog av dogs,
An’ take that wid yees to yer din o’ thaves.”

He helped the man of dogs into the street.
Then rose again that wondrous shout of joy:

"She lives! she lives! to bless us all, thank God,
Who turned the villain's bullet to the wall!"

They bathed her forehead; washed the bloody stains
From cheek and breast with costly handkerchief,
With prompt and eager hands, with cheering words;
With prayers, and tears, and blessings without end,
They grouped about her, and caressed their queen;
Then Josie's voice leaped o'er the multitude:

"Be seated, friends: It is a trifling wound,
Not worth a loss of temper. All is well!
Let no one counsel vengeance on the wretch;
Throw wide the door and let him go in peace."

"In pace, ye mane? He's paceable enough!
'Twas God that struck the ugly varmint down,
Or Vargin Mary, or some howly saint.
At ony ways he's dead, and lyin' here
Anint the flure—the ugly hounmadon."

The people turned as with a single will—
Confused and crowding, pressing firm and close,
And stood, incumbent, like a leaning wall,
Above the dead man lying on the floor.
The men, in horror, stared—the women screamed—
And for a moment every heart was still.

The Governor, reviving from her swoon,
Stood like a statue—rigidly erect

And glared around with wild, enquiring eyes.
The truth had struck her as the lightning strikes;
Struck deep enough to strike her reason down,
And blast her life—*She was the lecher's wife!*

"Room! room! For God's sake, give me air and room!"

"The lady Audley! heavens! what a change!
Is this the sweet-faced woman that we loved?
Medea's self, with all her frightful grief,
Ne'er matched the deadly horror of that face!"

The white-faced woman, ghastly as a corpse,
Straight through the wall of people pressed her way—
Her eyes set forward with a steady stare
As some one walking toward a precipice,
Blindly, to death. She threw her white arms up—

' Hold! men of murder! are ye cannibals?
You dare not tear a human heart out so!
Put down the body—is the world run mad,
To strangle men before the judges sit?
Stand back! the dignity of law demands
The price for blood for blood untimely shed.
I bail him—here's my bond; so, let him go!
Too late? too late for what? for charity?
He is my husband! will you take my bond!
Dead? was it fancy, or did some one speak?
Dead? who dare strike us with such a brutal word?

Stand back! I charge you all! stand still and see."

No other words she uttered, but fell down

Face-forward, helpless, heavily, and white,

Across the dead man lying on the floor.

Then Myron groaned in agony of soul,

And grasped the air, as some one who would hold

A fleeing treasure slipping from his arms.

"O, mother! mother! this is terrible!

Who is this man? Husband, did she say?

This lech'rous wretch my father? This vile blot

For purity like her's to love! Great God!

'Tis blasphemy against the name of love!"

He knelt above the living and the dead,

And strove to raise his mother from the corpse,

But strove in vain—the dead but clasped the dead.

He groaned aloud—fell forward heavily,

And all the world seemed falling down on him.

He woke—and found himself upon the floor;

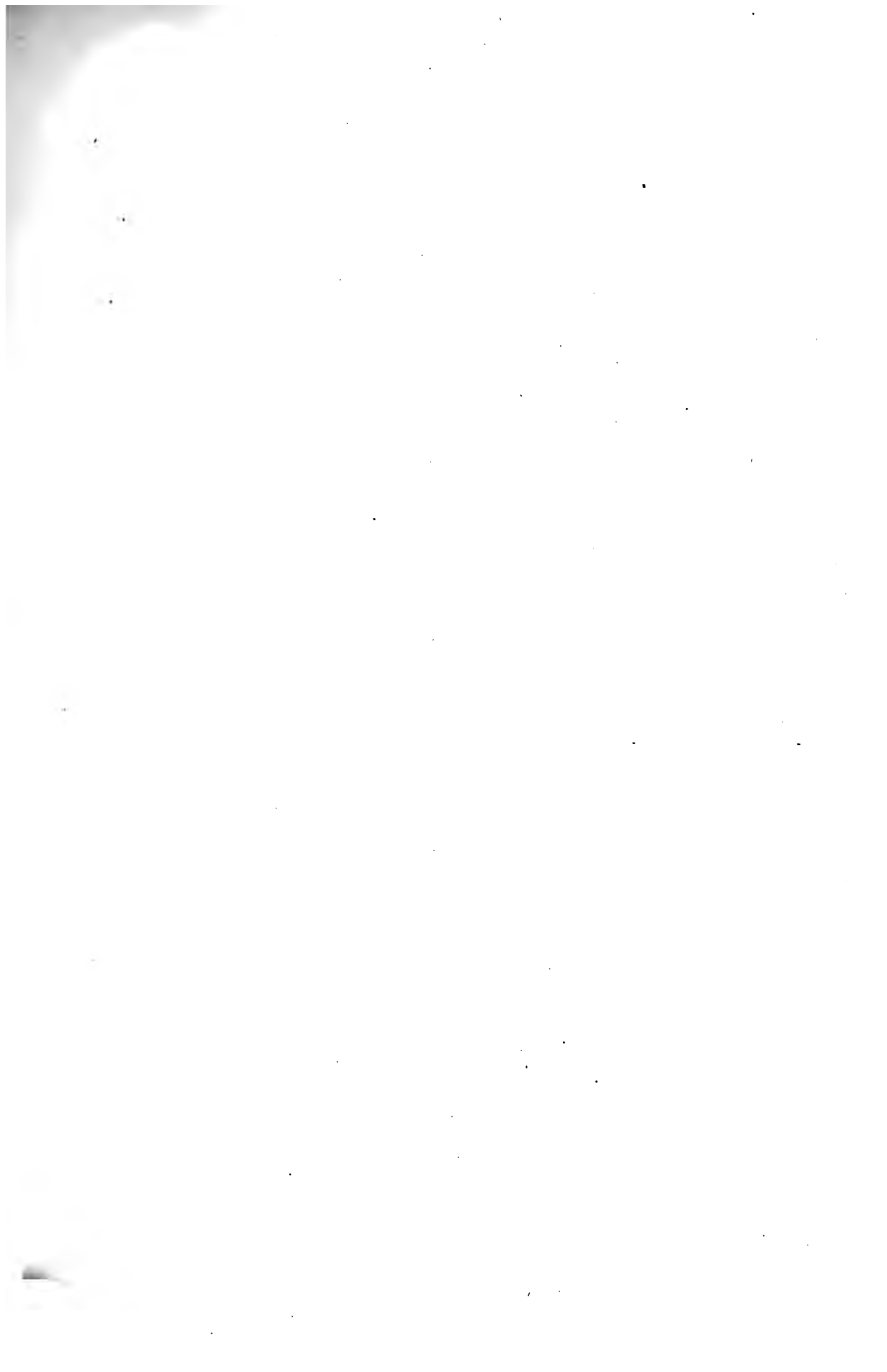
A heavy chair was pressing on his spine;

Its oaken arm across his twisted neck,

And so impressed him with a night-mare dream.

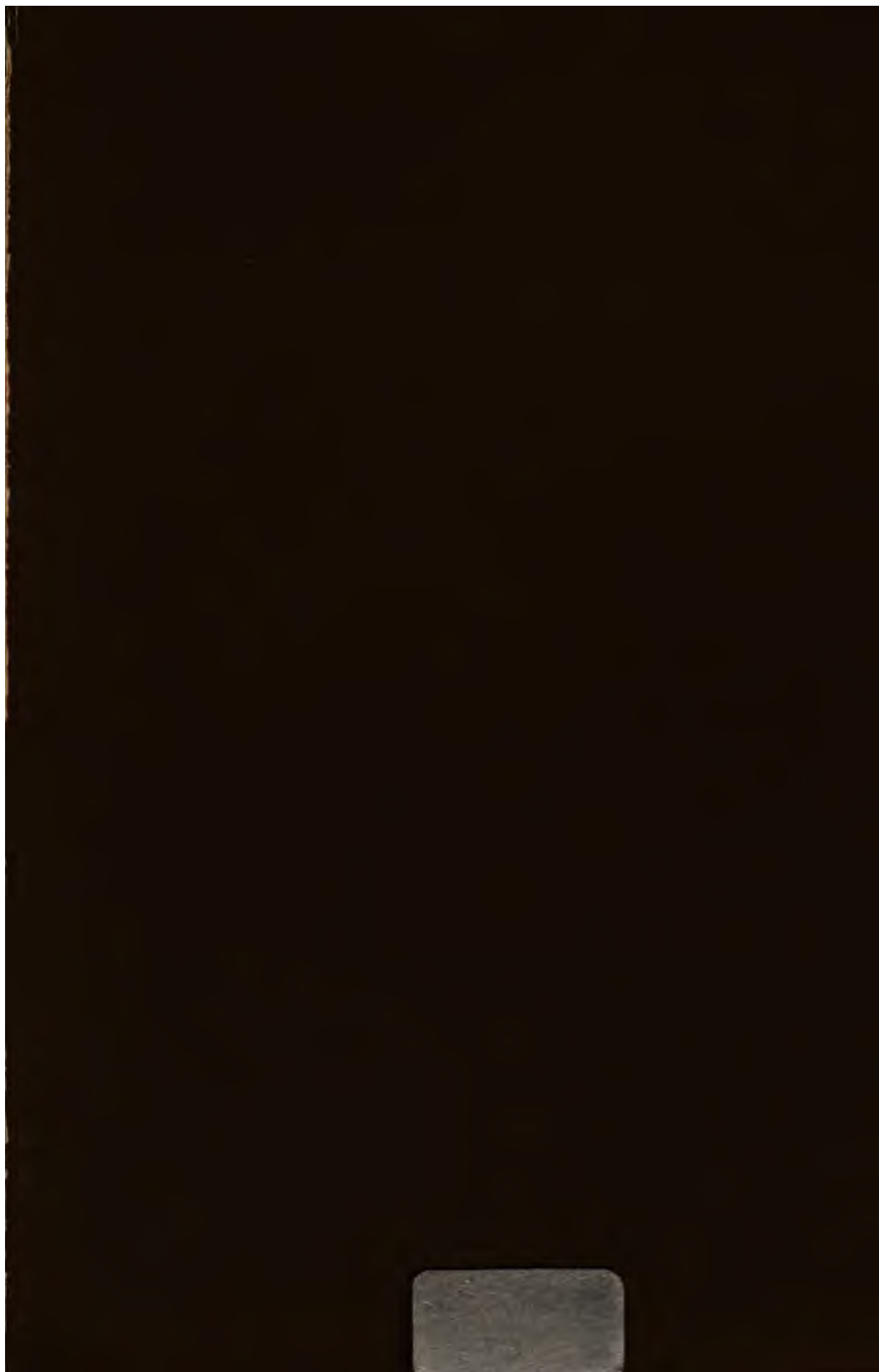
He threw it off, and, looking at the clock,

Discovered he had slept just *HALF AN HOUR*.









the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million (1990–2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the health and social care needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (2000) has stated that:

...the ageing population is a major challenge for the health service. The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 10.5 million in 1990 to 12.5 million in 2000. The number of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase from 4.5 million in 1990 to 6.5 million in 2000. The number of people aged 85 and over is projected to increase from 1.5 million in 1990 to 2.5 million in 2000.

The Department of Health (2000) has also stated that:

...the health service must be able to meet the needs of the ageing population. This means that the health service must be able to provide the care and support that people aged 65 and over need. This includes the provision of health care, social care, and housing.

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the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* has increased in the United Kingdom [10]. In the United States, *S. flexneri* has been reported to be the most common serotype of *Shigella* isolated from children with shigellosis [11]. In the United Kingdom, *S. flexneri* serotype 3 is the most common serotype isolated from children with shigellosis [12].

There is a paucity of data on the epidemiology of *S. flexneri* in the United Kingdom. In the 1980s, *S. flexneri* was the most common serotype of *Shigella* isolated from children with shigellosis in the United Kingdom [13]. In the 1990s, *S. flexneri* was the most common serotype of *Shigella* isolated from children with shigellosis in the United Kingdom [14].

The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of *S. flexneri* in children with shigellosis in the United Kingdom. The study was conducted in the United Kingdom, where *S. flexneri* is the most common serotype of *Shigella* isolated from children with shigellosis [12].

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